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MOSCOW AND EGYPT

ANNCR: OVER THE PAST WEEKEND, EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT ANWAR SADAT ASKED THE PARLIAMENT (PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY) TO CANCEL THE EGYPTIAN-SOVIET TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP SIGNED IN NINETEEN SEVENTY-ONE. AND MOSCOW, IN TURN, HAS WARNED PRESIDENT SADAT THAT THOSE WHO INITIATED THE DECISION TO BREAK THE FRIENDSHIP TREATY WILL BEAR GRAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONSEQUENCES. FROM MUNICH, VOA'S MARK HOPKINS HAS THESE OBSERVATIONS.

VOICE: SOVIET RELATIONS WITH EGYPT NOW SEEM AT THE LOWEST POINT IN TWENTY YEARS, SINCE THE SUEZ CANAL CRISIS OF NINETEEN FIFTY SIX WHEN MOSCOW UNDERTOOK TO MAKE EGYPT ITS CHIEF CLIENT STATE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THE SOVIET DECISION TWO YEARS LATER TO BEGIN ENORMOUS INVESTMENTS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE ASWAN HIGH DAM - AFTER THE UNITED STATES WITHDREW ITS SUPPORT FOR THAT PROJECT - WAS SYMBOLIC OF MOSCOW'S WILLINGNESS TO POUR HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF RUBLES INTO EGYPT FOR ARMS AND ECONOMIC AID.

SOVIET SUPPORT INTENSIFIED AFTER EGYPT'S DEFEAT AT THE HANDS OF ISRAELI FORCES IN THE SIX-DAY-WAR OF NINETEEN SIXTY SEVEN. ULTIMATELY SOME TWENTY THOUSAND SOVIET TROOPS AND TECHNICIANS FLOWED TO EGYPT.

IN NINETEEN SEVENTY ONE, EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT ANWAR SADAT AND SOVIET PRESIDENT NIKOLAI PODGORNY SIGNED A FIFTEEN YEAR TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION - THE TREATY THAT PRESIDENT SADAT HAS NOW ABROGATED. BUT SOVIET AND EGYPTIAN RELATIONS BEGAN TO SOUR IN NINETEEN SEVENTY TWO. THAT YEAR, PRESIDENT SADAT, SENSING TOO MUCH SOVIET INFLUENCE, ORDERED THE TWENTY THOUSAND SOVIET ADVISERS OUT OF THE COUNTRY. MOSCOW ACCEPTED THIS REBUKE, LATER PROVIDING EGYPT WITH TANKS, MISSILES AND JET AIRCRAFT

BEFORE AND DURING THE YOM KIPPUR WAR OF NINETEEN SEVENTY THREE.

SOVIET TIES WITH EGYPT BEGAN TO WEAKEN AFTER THE YOM KIPPUR WAR.. PRESIDENT SADAT CHARGING THAT THE SOVIET UNION FAILED TO PROVIDE NEW WEAPONS TO REPLACE THOSE DESTROYED IN THE WAR, AND THAT MOSCOW WAS TRYING TO DIVIDE THE ARAB WORLD. AMIDST THESE ACCUSATIONS, SOVIET PARTY LEADER LEONID BREZHNEV ABRUPTLY CANCELED A TRIP TO CAIRO. BY LAST SUMMER, THERE WERE REPORTS IN CAIRO NEWSPAPERS THAT PRESIDENT SADAT MIGHT ABROGATE THE TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION. THESE REPORTS COINCIDED WITH SOVIET-EGYPTIAN DISCUSSIONS OVER DELAYS IN THE REPAYMENT OF EGYPT'S HUGE DEBT TO THE SOVIET UNION...WHICH BY SOME ESTIMATES EXCEED TWO THOUSAND MILLION DOLLARS.

THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP, TOO, WAS APPARENTLY AWARE THAT THE TREATY WAS IN JEOPARDY. LAST NOVEMBER, AS PRESIDENT SADAT LEFT FOR A VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES, THE SOVIET PARTY NEWSPAPER PRAVDA PUBLISHED A SLASHING ATTACK ON EGYPT, ARGUING THAT EGYPT, NOT THE SOVIET UNION, HAD ASKED FOR THE TREATY. THREE WEEKS AGO, GENERAL SECRETARY BREZHNEV, SPEAKING AT THE TWENTY FIFTH PARTY CONGRESS IN MOSCOW, SAID THE SOVIET UNION REGARDED THE TREATY AS A "LONG TERM BASIS" FOR RELATIONS WITH EGYPT. BUT HE WARNED OF UNNAMED FORCES TRYING TO UNDERMINE THESE RELATIONS.

SO MOSCOW SEEMS TO HAVE PREPARED THE GROUND TO BE ABLE TO PUT THE ONUS ON EGYPT IF THE FRIENDSHIP TREATY WERE BROKEN. BUT NOW THAT PRESIDENT SADAT HAS CALLED FOR ITS CANCELLATION, A TWENTY YEAR LONG SOVIET DIPLOMATIC EFFORT COSTING HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF RUBLES SEEMS TO HAVE LOST MOSCOW ONE OF ITS MAJOR CLIENTS IN THE ARAB WORLD.

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